

Pausing for Honors

Message to the Fort Hood community from
MG Jeffery Hammond, Senior Mission Commander

We will begin respectfully honoring our nation and those who selflessly serve during post-wide Retreats Monday – Friday, beginning May 1.

A post-wide Retreat ceremony of this magnitude is not done in most places. Thankfully, Fort Hood is not most places. It is home to people who truly understand what it means to be dedicated Soldiers and Families serving our great nation.

Serving means, among other things, camaraderie, duty, pride and honor. It also means deployments, loneliness, and deprivation, fighting the hard battles, yes, even suffering wounds or dying for our country.

It is the Soldier and Family whose blood and sorrow purchased the liberties represented by our sacred emblem, the American flag. Which one of us can gaze upon our flag and not feel a lump come into our throats?

Those Stars and Stripes rally us, flutter from masts in front of buildings and homes, and descend to half-staff when our nation mourns. Our flag adorns our uniforms as we go into battle, sheaths our fallen warriors, and comforts their survivors.

When we lower the flag during Retreat, fold it and keep it under watch throughout the night, we are honoring a long-standing tradition by providing a dignified tribute to our nation's honored dead. This is our time for remembering our fallen warriors, those esteemed patriots who have given the last full measure.

We all know someone who has made the ultimate sacrifice, dying for the principles our flag represents. I can't imagine anyone not wanting to proudly demonstrate their appreciation of that sacrifice.

In order to facilitate everyone safely rendering proper honors during Retreat, traffic will be stopped on Fort Hood. This will delay you leaving the installation for a few minutes. Those minutes are small tokens, willingly paid, to bring this honorable tradition back into its rightful place of dignity, in honor of those who serve and sacrifice so much, particularly during time of war.

When I salute the flag during Retreat, I am demonstrating my allegiance to the principles of the United States of America, honoring our Soldiers and Families, and remembering those whose blood paid for the freedoms we all enjoy.

I am asking each of you to enthusiastically join me.